

Water Lines

SDW Hotline Report

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Top Ten Topics

Topic	Questions (phone & e-mail)	Percent of Total* Questions
Tap Water Testing	293**	12
Household Wells	182	8
Local Drinking Water Quality	175	7
Non-EPA Environmental	101	4
Lead	99	4
Home Water Treatment Units	97	4
Other EPA	90	4
Other Background	83	4
Public Notification	83	4
Non-Environmental	76	3

*A total of 2,348 questions were answered by the Hotline (via telephone and e-mail) in February 2003.

**Citizens who obtain their drinking water from private household wells asked 43 percent of the tap water testing questions.

Calls	E-mails	Total
1,516	301	1,817***

***A single call or e-mail may generate multiple questions.

Published Monthly

See past reports at

<http://intranet.epa.gov/ow/hotline>

Safe Drinking Water Hotline: National Toll-free No.: (800) 426-4791 or (877) EPAWATER

For More Information Contact:
Harriet Hubbard, EPA Project Officer
(202) 564-4621

Operated by Booz Allen Hamilton
Under Contract #GS-10F-0090J

What's New

New Publications:

- *Stage 1 Disinfection Byproducts Rule: Laboratory Quick Reference Guide*, EPA816-F-02-021, is now available at www.epa.gov/safewater/mdbp/implement.html.
- *System Partnership Solutions to Improve Public Health Protection*, EPA816-R-02-022, is now available at www.epa.gov/safewater/smallsys/ssinfo.htm or by contacting the Safe Drinking Water Hotline.
- *Sources of Technical and Financial Assistance for Small Drinking Water Systems*, EPA816-K-02-005, is now available at www.epa.gov/safewater/smallsys/ssinfo.htm or by contacting the National Service Center for Environmental Publications.
- *Using DWSRF Funds for Transmission and Distribution Infrastructure Needs*, EPA816-F-03-003, is now available at www.epa.gov/safewater/dwsrf.html#factsheets.

Monthly Trends

In the past three Monthly Reports, the Hotline has presented "monthly trends" related to public notification resulting from bacterial contamination in drinking water, specifically total coliform. In February 2003, the Hotline received a total of 83 questions related to public notification, forty percent of which were from concerned citizens who had received notices that their water systems were unable to achieve the removal requirements for total organic carbon (TOC). Systems regulated under the Stage I Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule that serve 10,000 or more persons are required to meet the treatment technique for TOC removal beginning January 1, 2002, with compliance based on a running annual average (40 CFR 141.130(b)(1)). The notification process for violations of this treatment technique began after the annual average calculations were computed for 2002.

In an effort to better address our callers' questions and concerns regarding the significance of the TOC removal violations for which they have received public notifications, the Hotline has developed the following special series of questions and answers.

Q: What is total organic carbon (TOC)?

A: TOC is a composite measurement of the amount of organic material in a water sample. It is an indicator of the natural organic matter which is found in source water that is treated to produce drinking water. Most of the organic material present in source water is due to decaying plant and animal matter. Generally, the treatment process removes some TOC from the water.

Q: Is TOC a health concern?

A: Disinfectants (such as chlorine) are added to drinking water to reduce the risk of disease from pathogens. However, the disinfectants can also react with organic material (measured as TOC) and inorganic material in water to form unintended disinfection byproducts (DBPs) (e.g., trihalomethanes). These DBPs may pose health risks at a certain level of exposure. By lowering the concentration of TOC, public water systems can reduce DBP formation and exposure.

Q: If DBPs are the concern, why am I receiving this notice about TOC?

A: The Stage 1 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts (DBP) Rule requires some water systems to remove a specific percentage of TOC from the water during treatment. Reducing the amount of TOC in the water should reduce the amount of DBPs that are formed. Your water system is notifying you that it did not remove as much TOC from the water as required by the Stage 1 DBP Rule.

February 2003

Calendar:

Who?	What?	Where?	When?	More Information
NDWAC	Contaminant Candidate List Classification Process Workgroup	RESOLVE, Inc. Suite 275 1235 23 rd St. NW Washington, DC	2/5/2003 – 2/6/2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact RESOLVE at (202) 944-2300
NSF International	Public Water System Compliance Using Point-of-Use and Point-of-Entry Treatment Technologies	Orlando, FL	2/13/2003 – 2/14/2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For more information: www.nsf.org/cphe/pou
EPA	SDWA Tribal Program Meeting	Las Vegas, NV	2/25/2003 – 2/26/2003	
NSTA	National Science Teachers Convention	Philadelphia, PA	3/23/2003 – 3/26/2003	
NDWAC	Contaminant Candidate List Classification Process Workgroup	Washington, DC	3/27/2003 – 3/28/2003	
NRWA	Rural Water Rally	Washington, DC	4/6/2003 – 4/8/2003	
OW, OSWER, EPA Region 4	2003 EPA Science Forum	Washington, DC	5/5/2003 – 5/7/2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For more information: www.epa.gov/ord/scienceforum
National Association State Floodplain Managers	Annual Conference	St. Louis, MO	5/11/2003 – 5/16/2003	
NDWAC	Contaminant Candidate List Classification Process Workgroup	Washington, DC	5/12/2003 – 5/13/2003	
EPA	Source Water Protection Conference	Washington, DC	6/2/2003 – 6/4/2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For more information: www.epa.gov/safewater/protect/swpconf.html
AWWA	Annual Conference	Anaheim, CA	6/15/2003 – 6/19/2003	
NDWAC	Contaminant Candidate List Classification Process Workgroup	Washington, DC	7/16/2003- 7/17/2003	
EPA	Community Involvement Conference	Philadelphia, PA	7/22/2003- 7/25/2003	

Frequently Asked Qs & As

This section provides answers to frequently asked questions not necessarily represented in one of the Top Ten Topic categories.

Q: When a public water system (PWS) asks its customers to collect first-draw samples for lead testing compliance, how long can the PWS wait before performing acidification on the samples? After acidification, must the first-draw samples stand for a certain period of time?

A: A PWS has up to 14 days after the first-draw samples are collected to perform the acidification. After acidification, the samples must stand in the original containers for the time specified in the approved EPA method before the samples can be analyzed (40 CFR 141.86(b)(2)).

Q: A community water system (CWS) is required to complete an annual Consumer Confidence Report (CCR). Is it necessary to include contaminants detected while monitoring for compliance with the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR)?

A: Yes. The CCR table must contain detected unregulated contaminants for which a CWS is required to monitor, including the average and range at which the contaminant is detected. The report may include a brief explanation of why the CWS is monitoring for unregulated contaminants (40 CFR 141.153(d)(7)).

Q: I plan to construct a new Class V underground injection control (UIC) well that will be associated with the recovery of geothermal energy for the production of electric power. Do I need to provide notification to anyone? If so, to whom do I need to send it and what information do I need to include in the notification?

A: You must provide basic inventory information about your well to your state, tribal, or EPA UIC Director, if you have not already done so pursuant to 40 CFR 144.26. If you are in a state that has UIC Program primacy (i.e., the state runs the UIC Class V Program), then you must contact your state UIC Director to determine exactly what information you must submit and by what date. If you are in a state that does not have primacy for its Class V UIC Program or in Indian Country, then EPA implements the Class V Program (i.e., Direct Implementation or DI Programs) and you must submit the inventory information described in 40 CFR 144.83(a)(2) prior to construction of your well. The basic UIC inventory information required by both primacy states and DI states or tribes includes the facility name and location, the name and address of a legal contact, the ownership of the facility, the nature and type of well(s), and the operating status of the injection well(s) (40 CFR 144.83).

Q: What must a public water system using chlorine or chloramines measure to determine compliance with the maximum residual disinfectant level (MRDL)?

A: For compliance with the Stage 1 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule, community water systems (CWSs) and non-transient non-community water systems (NTNCWSs) using chlorine to maintain a residual disinfectant must measure either free chlorine or total chlorine to determine compliance with the MRDL. CWSs and NTNCWs using chloramines to maintain a residual disinfectant must measure either total chlorine or combined chlorine (63 FR 69390, 69425; December 16, 1998).

Did You Know?

Typically, less than one percent of the water produced in a PWS is used for drinking and cooking.

(Cotruvo, Joseph A., Joseph A. Cotruvo Jr., "Nontraditional Approaches for Providing Potable Water in Small Systems," *Journal American Water Works Association* 95, No. 3 (2003): pp. 69-76.)

Monthly Summary of Hotline Service

Total number of calls answered	1,516
Total number of e-mails received	301
Average wait time (in seconds)	0:31
Percent of calls satisfied immediately	99.9%
Percent of all calls answered in < 1 min	85.4%
Percent of callbacks answered in 5 days	100%
Percent of e-mails answered in 5 days	100%
Number of times callers listened to recorded message about local DW quality	1,154
Number of times callers listened to recorded message about arsenic rule	58

Comparison to Previous Year

	Calls	E-mails
February 2003	1,516	301
February 2002	1,517	300

Top Ten Referrals

Inquiry Referred to:	Number of Referrals	Percent of Total* Referrals
1. State Lab Certification	255	19
2. EPA Internet	185	14
3. State PW SS	146	11
4. Local Water System	142	11
5. NSF/WQA/UL	116	9
6. AGWT/WSC	81	6
7. Local Public Health	60	4
8. EPA Regions	52	4
9. Non-EPA Internet	47	4
10. Other Hotlines	45	3

*A total of 1,341 referrals to other resources, agencies, and organizations were provided by the Hotline in February 2003.

Customer Profiles

Customer	Calls	E-mails
Analytical Laboratories	20	3
Citizen - Private Well	281	48
Citizen - PWS	790	105
Consultants/Industry/Trade (DW)	84	18
Consultants/Industry/Trade (Other)	95	23
Environmental Groups	4	1
EPA	17	0
Other Federal Agency	9	5
Government, Local	11	8
Government, State	36	12
Government, Tribal	1	0
Spanish Speaking	5	0
International	1	23
Media	7	1
Medical Professional	4	3
Public Water System	99	13
Schools/University	30	38
Other	22	0
TOTALS	1,516	301

Daily Call Data

	Total Calls Answered	Average Wait Time mm:sec
3-February	88	00:36
4-February	84	00:25
5-February	85	00:32
6-February	80	00:23
7-February	87	00:18
10-February	81	00:31
11-February	91	00:22
12-February	88	00:27
13-February	95	00:32
14-February	72	00:20
19-February	81	00:46
20-February	72	00:17
21-February	84	00:32
24-February	90	00:59
25-February	97	00:41
26-February	92	00:31
27-February	76	00:33
28-February	73	00:37
TOTALS	1,516	00:31

Topic Categories

Category	Calls	E-mails
Microbials/Disinfection Byproducts		
Chlorine	13	5
Coliforms	34	6
Cryptosporidium	17	1
Disinfection/Disinfection Byproducts (Other)	39	6
Disinfection – Home Water	23	0
Other Microbials	6	0
Storage – Home Water	17	1
Surface Water Treatment (SWTR, ESWTR, LT1FBR)	58	3
Trihalomethane (THM)	21	3
Inorganic Chemicals (IOC)/Synthetic Organic Chemicals (SOC)		
Arsenic	39	5
Fluoride	12	5
Methyl- <i>tertiary</i> -butyl-ether (MTBE)	10	1
Perchlorate	8	0
Phase I, II & V	25	7
Sodium Monitoring	5	2
Sulfate	5	0
Lead and Copper		
Copper	15	0
Lead	94	5
Lead Contamination Control Act (LCCA)/Lead Ban	3	0
Radionuclides		
Radionuclides (Other)	20	2
Radionuclides (Radon)	58	6
Secondary DW Regulations		
Secondary DW Regulations	36	9
SDWA Background/Overview		
Definitions & Applicability	19	10
MCL List	56	3
Other Background	60	23
SDWA	11	3

Category	Calls	E-mails
Water on Tap	14	5
Other DW Regulations		
Analytical Methods (DW)	19	10
Contaminant Candidate List/ Drinking Water Priority List	4	0
Consumer Confidence Report (DW)	69	6
DW Primacy (PWS)	0	1
Operator (PWS) Certification	5	1
Other Drinking Water Security	18	9
Public Notification (PWS)	81	2
Security Planning Grants	11	5
State Revolving Fund (DW)	5	15
Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR)	48	0
Other Drinking Water		
Additives Program	5	3
Bottled Water	28	4
Complaints about PWS	34	13
Compliance & Enforcement (PWS)	11	6
Home Water Treatment Units	86	11
Infrastructure/Cap. Development	5	5
Local DW Quality	152	23
Tap Water Testing	277	16
Treatment/BATs (DW)	17	20
Drinking Water Source Protection		
Ground Water Rule	4	0
Sole Source Aquifer	0	0
Source Water/Wellhead Protect.	16	8
UIC Program	13	4
Out of Purview		
Household Wells	153	29
Non-Environmental	60	16
Non-EPA Environmental	58	43
Other EPA (Programs)	71	19
TOTALS	1,968	380

EPA DISCLAIMER

Answers to questions in the Safe Drinking Water Hotline monthly report are intended to be purely informational and are based on SDWA provisions, EPA regulations, guidance, and established policy effective at the time of publication. The answers given reflect EPA staff's best judgment at the time and do not represent a final or official EPA interpretation. This report does not substitute for the applicable provisions of statutes and regulations, guidance, etc., nor is it a regulation itself. Thus, it does not impose legally-binding requirements on EPA, States, or the regulated community. An answer to a question in this report may be revised at any time to reflect EPA's revisions to existing regulations, changes in EPA's approach to interpreting its regulations or statutory authority, or for other reasons. EPA may provide a different answer to a question in this report in the future.

Also, an answer provided in this report may not apply to a particular situation based upon the circumstances. Any decisions regarding a particular case will be made based on the applicable statutes and regulations. Therefore, interested parties are free to raise questions and objections about the appropriateness of the application of an answer in this report to a particular situation, and EPA will consider whether or not the recommendations or interpretations in the answer are accurate and appropriate in that situation. The information in this report is not intended, nor can it be relied upon, to create any rights enforceable by any party in litigation with the United States.

SAFE DRINKING WATER HOTLINE MONTHLY REPORT

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APPENDIX A: FEDERAL REGISTER SUMMARIES

NOTICE

“Agency Information Collection Activities; OMB Responses” February 3, 2003 (68 FR 5288)

This document announced Office of Management and Budget (OMB) responses to Agency clearance requests, in compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 et. seq.). Specifically, EPA ICR No. 2085.01, “2003 Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey,” was approved November 27, 2002. This Information Collection Request (ICR), OMB No. 2040-0251, expires November 30, 2005. Also, EPA ICR No. 1912.01, “Information Collection Request: National Primary Drinking Water Regulation for Lead and Copper (Final Rule),” was granted a short-term extension on December 19, 2002. This ICR, OMB No. 2040-0210, now expires on March 31, 2003.